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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Navigable Rhine. By EDWIN J. CLAPP. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911. 8vo, pp. xvii+134. \$1.00 net.

This study, translated and enlarged from its original form as a Doctor's dissertation at the University of Berlin, was granted first place in the Hart, Schaffner & Marx prize essay competition in 1910. The book is well illustrated, is written in an unusually readable style, and in many respects may be regarded as an excellent study in the history of transportation development.

The early history of the Rhine, of its relation to continental trade routes, and of the long struggle for the abolition of the exorbitant tolls charged by princes and river barons at every turn, constitute the first portion of the book. This is followed by an account of the relative decline of river traffic which occurred between 1850 and 1875, coincidentally with the development of railway transportation in Germany. Then comes the most important part of the study, namely, "Causes for the Prosperity of Commerce on the Rhine."

Two main causes are assigned for the enormous increase in traffic on the river since 1875: first, the growth of a heavy tonnage in bulky materials, mainly coal, iron ore, and grain; and, second, the nationalizing of German railways and the consequent elimination of ruinous competition. During these years, also, the riparian cities constructed commodious harbors, wharves, and transshipping facilities; and by a remission of dues gave an unusual stimulus to river shipping. The development of steam barges and of the shipping corporations on the river is a final cause of the rapid growth of water commerce.

Chap. xi should prove of most interest and value to the American reader, for it is concerned with the question of rail and water rates. But unfortunately in what should be the most important part of the study the author has not maintained the high standard set in the earlier chapters. While he recognizes at times practically all of the questions involved he later draws his conclusions with only a partial regard to the points at issue. The widespread interest in this particular question and the important conclusions likely to be drawn from Mr. Clapp's study will, we trust, justify more than the merest mention here.

The author fairly recognizes that in counting the cost of transportation by water it is necessary to consider not alone the mere haulage charges proper, but the cost of canalization, terminal facilities, etc., as well. And by a statistical presentation on pp. 108-9 (slightly inadequate in some respects), he shows that transportation on the Rhine should be less costly than on German railroads. He then addresses himself to the question of incidental railway advantages in the way of speed, promptness of delivery, greater regularity, and insurance of cargo. These corresponding disadvantages of carriage by water are said to be at a minimum on the Rhine, because of its great capacity and relative freedom from ice, fogs, floods, etc.; but points so important in the case can hardly be adequately treated in a brief page discussion (p. 110). The conclusion drawn here (which it should be noted is applicable only to traffic requiring no transshipment) is not so clean-cut and convincing as one might wish.

Mr. Clapp, however, does not ignore the cost of transshipment, and on p. 112 he presents a table of comparative rates on coal shipped by rail direct from Gelsenkirchen in the Westphalian industrial region to Mannheim, and coal shipped by a broken rail and water route, including cost of transshipment at Duisburg and again at Mannheim. This table shows the all-rail cost to be \$2.02 per ton, as compared with a total cost by rail and water of only \$1.15 a ton. But he omits to add to the latter cost, though he mentions it on the following page, the loss on account of breakage and resifting, amounting to 33.5 cents a ton. What is equally important, he does not inform us that the transfer charges fixed by the state are merely nominal, and confessedly less than the actual cost of the service. While the author tells us elsewhere that the Rhine has no tolls, he does not include in the cost of transportation by water the loss of interest on the capital invested in the waterway, nor the state's outlays for maintenance and operation. The author tells us on p. 55 that no dues are charged in the harbor at Mannheim, though he does not tell us whether the same is true at Duisburg. An adequate comparison should include the deficits on this account. Finally, although Mr. Clapp mentions in various places the fact that German railways are run at a profit of 6 or 7 per cent while the waterway investment yields no profit (but rather a deficit) he makes no allowance for this in his rate comparison. It is however quite possible that even with these various omissions included Rhine transportation might still be shown to serve an economical function, especially if regard be had to the utilization of otherwise waste space, prevention of floods, etc. It is to be regretted that the

present study has failed to push the matter to a more convincing conclusion. Too much seems to be taken for granted.

In the closing chapter the Rhine and the Mississippi are compared. Here, again, the treatment is far from thorough. The author traces the parallel traffic history of the two rivers up to 1870, and then shows the striking contrast since that time. He observes that if transportation is to become important on the Mississippi, co-operation must be maintained between the railways and the river and the river must be enormously improved. But as to the cost of such a development, as compared with that on the Rhine, he is wholly silent. On p. 126 he speaks hopefully of the reservoir plan of control proposed by United States Hydrographer Leighton. Since the army engineers have estimated that such a scheme for the Ohio alone would cost several hundred millions of dollars, Mr. Clapp should have raised the question whether the cost were not prohibitive. It is stated, also, that the physical difficulties in the way of harbor construction are not insurmountable, if only the Mississippi cities will shake off their apathy and undertake the task in earnest; but again there are no comparisons as to the probable cost.

Does the history of the Rhine teach that we should or should not attempt the development of shipping on the Mississippi? The wording of the concluding pages of the book is so indefinite and the conclusions are couched in such non-committal terms that the result of the entire study is a matter of conjecture. The publishers of the book announce that, "if the Rhine's harbors, boats and barges, steamship companies, and railroad tariffs could be transferred to the Mississippi, they would be just as successful there as they have been in Germany." Such indeed seems to be the deduction to be drawn from the greater part of the closing chapter, but on p. 128 we find Mr. Clapp writing: "Yet with all these disadvantages of the Mississippi, as compared with the Rhine, removed, one cannot prophesy with certainty that a traffic would arise on the Mississippi comparable with that on the Rhine." In a page or two following it is suggested that the Mississippi is not so situated with reference to bulky traffic and trade routes as to secure any such amount of traffic as is possessed by the Rhine. This is only too true, and it is regrettable that the author did not carry his investigations farther and give us more definite results, rather than to shift the responsibility by concluding as follows: "Are they [the Mississippi cities] building modern water terminals or constructing steel fleets of steamers, tugs, and barges under the management of large and responsible companies? If not, this apathy speaks louder than all clamors for deeper channels and higher

levees. If those who know the river best will show their confidence in its future, not only will they easily obtain any reasonable expenditures to improve and extend navigation on the Mississippi system, but also the railway legislation which the river needs will not long be withheld." May this perchance mean that the author believes the improvement of the river for purposes of navigation economically advisable? The reviewer is frankly in doubt.

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National and Local Finance: A review of the relation between central and local authorities in England, France, Belgium, and Prussia, during the nineteenth century. By J. WATSON GRICE, with a preface by SIDNEY WEBB. London: P. S. King & Son, 1910. 8vo, pp. xxiv+404.

Grants in Aid: A criticism and a proposal. By SIDNEY WEBB. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911. 8vo, pp. 135.

The two books under consideration are numbers 20 and 24, respectively, of the monographs in economics and political science by writers connected with the London School of Economics and Political Science. Mr. Grice's book, as the subtitle indicates, is intended as a survey of the financial relations between central and local authorities in the countries mentioned; while Mr. Webb's study deals with the peculiar financial device that has grown out of those relations in England.

The extensiveness of the field covered by the more general study is apparent; and this, together with the complexity of the subject, presents a problem in treatment which the author has not been entirely successful in solving. Summaries are almost entirely lacking, and the main features of the systems of finance under consideration are not made to stand out distinctly. In consequence the reader spends much time wandering through a wilderness of well-documented detail from which he is not extricated until the concluding chapters of the book. To the many natural difficulties of the subject, moreover, the writer brings a style which aggravates an already abstruse treatment. Though these faults by no means destroy the worth of the book, they do detract mightily from its interest.

Considered in detail Mr. Grice's study is found to contain much valuable data not hitherto accessible in convenient form. The first six chapters deal with the relation of the central and local authorities